

**TOWNSHIP OF SHENANGO
MERCER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA**

ORDINANCE NO. 192-2026

AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF SHENANGO, MERCER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, AMENDING CHAPTER 27, ARTICLE 6 OF THE SHENANGO TOWNSHIP CODE OF ORDINANCES, RELATED TO ZONING, ALSO KNOWN AS THE “SHENANGO TOWNSHIP ZONING ORDINANCE”; PROVIDING FOR CONDITIONAL USES IN SECTION 605 BY ADDING A NEW SUBSECTION 605.04, PROVIDING CRITERIA FOR THE SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEMS CONDITIONAL USE.

WHEREAS, the Township of Shenango (“Township”) encourages the reasonable development of all legal uses of property for the benefit of Township residents and guests; and

WHEREAS, the Township permits Solar Energy Systems, having previously provided criteria for their use as a special exception in Section 604.01 of the Shenango Township Zoning Ordinance;

WHEREAS, the Solar Energy System use was changed to be permitted in all zoning districts as a conditional use in Ordinance 188-2023; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors desires to enact a provision to amend the Zoning Ordinance to provide the same criteria for Solar Energy Systems permitted as a conditional use as those that previously provided for the use as a special exception.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED AND ENACTED BY THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE TOWNSHIP OF SHENANGO, MERCER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, AND THE TOWNSHIP OF SHENANGO HEREBY ORDAINS AND ENACTS BY THE AUTHORITY OF THE SAME AS FOLLOWS:

1. **ADDITION OF SECTION 605.04.** Chapter 27, Article 6, Section 605, titled Conditional Uses, is hereby amended to add a new Section 605.04, which shall read as follows:

605.04. Solar Energy Systems (SES). Solar energy systems may be permitted as conditional uses, provided the application complies with the following conditions and requirements, in addition to any other criteria generally applicable to conditional uses:

A. Plans for the SES shall be submitted for review according to the provisions of the Mercer County Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance as a major land development plan.

1. The single SES development area may include improvements on a single or multiple properties, under single or multiple ownership.

2. Subdivision of properties may not be required when an SES development area includes improvements within an identified lease area that is less than the entire lot or tax parcel.

B. Number of Principal Structures and Uses on a Lot. For purposes of the requirements of this chapter, the SES structures or use may be permitted as a conditional use that includes multiple structures as a single principal or accessory use. Such use may be under single lease area covering a single or multiple properties, under single or multiple ownership.

C. Minimum Site Size. The minimum SES development area shall be 50 acres.

1. The SES development area shall be permitted to be located on one or more lots or tax parcels that do not need to be under common ownership so long as the applicant of the SES provides written authorization from the owner(s) of all lots or tax parcels on which the SES development area will be located.
2. The SES development area shall include all principal and accessory structures, which includes all of the solar panel arrays (including the spaces between the rows of arrays), distribution wires, batteries, storage cells and all other mechanical equipment using solar radiation to generate, store, and distribute energy. This area also shall include any substations and inverters as well as access driveways providing access to a public road, buffers, utilities and stormwater management facilities.

D. Minimum Yard Setbacks.

1. SES development area shall comply with all minimum yard setback requirements for principal structures established in the applicable zoning district, except that the SES development area shall be located a minimum distance of 50 feet from all exterior lot lines. This yard setback requirement shall not be applicable to contiguous interior property lines bisecting the SES development area.
2. SES fenced area shall include all of the solar panel arrays (including the spaces between the rows of arrays), distribution wires, batteries, storage cells and all other mechanical equipment in the SES development area to be enclosed within a minimum six-foot-tall security fence.
 - a) The SES fenced area shall not include any wetlands or environmentally sensitive areas.
 - b) The SES fenced area also shall not include any access driveways providing access to a public road, buffers, utilities or stormwater management facilities that are not enclosed by such fence.
3. Access driveways, utilities and stormwater management facilities that are not enclosed within the required fence surrounding the SES development area shall be permitted to be located within the required yard setbacks.

E. Minimum Buffer Area/Screening.

1. Any required buffer and screening planting shall be located outside of the required fencing that surrounds the equipment within the SES fenced area.
2. Within the minimum yard setbacks as required, a minimum twenty-five-foot-wide buffer area consisting of natural and undisturbed vegetation shall be preserved or provided around the perimeter of the SES fenced area.
3. Vegetation Preservation. Except in connection with installation and operation of the SES, access driveways, utilities and stormwater management facilities, existing on-site vegetation shall be preserved to the maximum extent practicable.
4. Access driveways, utilities and stormwater management facilities that are not enclosed within the required fence surrounding the SES site may be permitted to be located within the required buffer area.
5. Where the SES development area, not including any access driveways providing access to a public road, is located within 100 feet of i) an existing residential dwelling located on an adjoining lot, or ii) a boundary of a residential district, the buffer area shall be suitably planted and screened as may be required by the Planning Commission. The buffer area may include a combination of preserved existing mature vegetation and/or newly installed vegetation, walls or fences, or topography, or other screening treatment, so as to achieve a minimum of 50% opacity throughout the year, at a minimum height of six feet, within five years of the SES commencing operation.

F. Site Disturbance. Site disturbance, including but not limited to, grading, soil removal, excavation, soil compaction, and tree removal in connection with installation of the SES site, access driveways, utilities and stormwater management facilities shall be minimized to the extent practicable. An erosion and sedimentation control plan shall be required in accordance with the requirements of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and Mercer County Conservation District to control erosion and sedimentation at the perimeter of disturbance during the construction of the SES.

G. Maximum Lot Coverage. The SES fenced area, which contains all of the principal and accessory structures of the SES, shall not cover more than 40% of the collective area of the lot or lots on which the SES development area is located.

H. Access, Off-Street Parking and Off-Street Loading.

1. A minimum ten-foot-wide gravel access driveway shall be provided within a minimum twenty-foot-wide access easement connecting the SES development area to a public or private road, to assure adequate emergency and service access is provided.
2. Access driveways and aisles provided and installed for on-site circulation and maintenance between the rows of solar panel arrays within the SES fenced area may be grass covered, provided sufficient gravel or stable access driveways are available for emergency access.

3. No additional off-street parking spaces and off-street loading spaces are required. Therefore, the requirements of Article 7, Parking and Loading Regulations, of this chapter are not applicable.
- I. Maximum Height.
 1. Solar panel arrays must be ground mounted and shall not exceed 20 feet in height when oriented at maximum tilt.
 2. Except as permitted elsewhere in this chapter, all equipment shall not exceed 20 feet in height.
 3. All buildings shall not exceed the maximum building height for the application zoning district.
 - J. Glare. Solar panel arrays shall incorporate antireflective surfaces or be placed and arranged such that reflected solar radiation or glare shall not be directed onto adjoining properties or roads.
 - K. Noise. In addition to the applicable yard setback requirements of the chapter, substations and inverters shall be set back a minimum distance so the noise levels from such substations or inverter shall not exceed 40 dBA when measured at the exterior lot line.
 1. The applicant for the SES shall provide to the Board of Supervisors during the conditional use approval process equipment specifications and/or propagation evidence and a certified report that demonstrates the noise to be generated by the proposed substation and inverters and demonstrates compliance with the noise limitation set forth above.
 2. Additional buffer measures may be required where the noise limitation cannot otherwise be met.
 - L. Signs. Warning/safety signs indicating voltage shall be placed on solar equipment to the extent appropriate. Solar equipment shall not be used for displaying any advertising. All signs, flags, streamers or similar items, both temporary and permanent, are prohibited on solar equipment except:
 1. Manufacturer's, installer's or operator's identification;
 2. Appropriate warning signs and placards;
 3. Signs that may be required by a federal or state government agency;
 4. Signs that provide twenty-four-hour emergency contact information, including address, telephone number.
 - M. Abandonment. Upon commencing commercial operation, any SES that has not generated electricity for a period of 12 consecutive months shall be deemed to be abandoned and shall be decommissioned within 12 months from the date it is deemed abandoned. A decommissioning plan shall be submitted as part of the zoning permit application for such SES and shall include, but not be limited to, the following:
 1. A schedule and methods for the removal of such SES;

2. A plan for restoring the site to a condition similar to its condition that existed immediately prior to the development of such SES, including grading and vegetative stabilization;
3. A performance bond, decommissioning trust or escrow account, or letter of credit or a financial guarantee in an amount to be based upon the estimated cost of the decommissioning to insure completion of the decommissioning plan, which shall be submitted as part of the zoning permit application for such SES;
4. Any obsolete or unused SES and appurtenant structures shall be removed from the property within 12 months of abandonment or decommissioning.

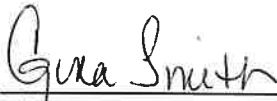
SECTION 2. REPEALER. All ordinances or parts of ordinances conflicting with any of the provisions of this Ordinance are hereby repealed insofar as the same affects this Ordinance.

SECTION 3. SEVERABILITY. The provisions of this Ordinance shall be severable and, if any of the provisions hereof shall be held unconstitutional, void or otherwise unenforceable, such shall not affect the validity of any of the remaining provisions of said Ordinance.

SECTION 4. EFFECTIVE DATE. The provisions of this ordinance shall become effective five (5) days after its date of adoption.

SHENANGO TOWNSHIP ORDAINS AND ENACTS AND IT IS HEREBY ORDAINED AND ENACTED FINALLY INTO LAW BY THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE TOWNSHIP OF SHENANGO THIS 14TH DAY OF APRIL, 2026.

ATTEST:



Gina Smith, Secretary

**SHENANGO TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

By: 

Tom Hubert, Chair

By: 

Earl Butterfield, Sr., Vice Chair

By: 

Patrick Giardinà

By: 

Dale Perry

By: 

Kyle Roth